

**Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective.** INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES COMMITTEE ON ELECTRONIC RECORDS. Paris: International Council on Archives, 1997. 55 p. ISBN 0-9682361-03.

**Electronic Records Programs Report on the 1994/95 Survey.** INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES COMMITTEE ON ELECTRONIC RECORDS. Paris: International Council on Archives, 1996. 70 p. ISBN 0-9682361-1-1.

**Electronic Records Management: A Literature Survey.** ALF ERLANDSSON AND THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES COMMITTEE ON ELECTRONIC RECORDS. Paris: International Council on Archives, 1997. 118 p. ISBN 0-9682361-2-X.

These three publications as a group represent as close to a clear statement as can be hoped for on the challenges of electronic records. The booklets can be viewed as a description of the landscape, an analysis of the situation, and a proposed approach to electronic records issues. The *Electronic Records Programs Report on the 1994/95 Survey* provides a global overview of selected elements of electronic records programs; the *Electronic Records Management: A Literature Survey* provides a more substantive commentary on key issues; and the *Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective* offers a non-prescriptive framework for establishing an archival electronic records program. From these perspectives, all three publications are reasoned and accessible. This balance, in itself, is remarkable given the diversity of experience and approach which exists within the membership of the ICA Committee on Electronic Records. Points which have divided some of the individual members of the committee are treated here with a degree of equanimity, making the booklets a good primer for archivists approaching electronic records for the first time, while, on the other hand, more experienced archivists would do well to study some of the points of difference still evident in the *Literature Survey* and *Guide*.

The *Report on the 1994/95 Survey*, although now dated, still possesses some value. The report reveals the broad differences in national electronic records programs surveyed and the dramatically different conceptions of the problems posed by electronic records. Of the 189 questionnaires transmitted, only 35 archives responded that they had some form of archival electronic records program. For the remaining 154 archives it would appear that electronic records were just not a going concern in 1994. One suspects these statistics would be quite different today, for in the last five years even less developed nations have been wired into the Internet and are seeing the beginnings of an electronic work environment in their countries. There is also a reasonable hope that any

future survey questions will not be answered with question marks and that more trends and common approaches will emerge.

It is towards this common understanding that the *Literature Survey* and the *Guide* are attempting to lead. In the former, Alf Erlandsson covers a great deal of ground, touching on many of the issues around which the challenge of electronic records revolve, including the custodial versus post custodial debate, the definition of a record, the utility of standards, and use of metadata as archival description. A chapter devoted to the policies of eight European nations provides a real indication of the trends in this field. On the whole, though, there is a heavy debt in the *Literature Survey* to the work done at the University of Pittsburgh on functional requirements for electronic record-keeping systems. The theoretical concepts are elaborated on by drawing on the substantial body of literature produced by the Pittsburgh project as well as other works that have borrowed from this same source. Indeed, with three of the four annexes dedicated to representations of functional requirements, this may be one of the best synopses of the Pittsburgh project available.

While the significance of the Pittsburgh project is undeniable, the author does depend a great deal on its conceptions to form the spine of his work. There is some balance provided in the comparative section on the University of British Columbia project and there is a wealth of information in the footnotes. However, the survey often lacks the realism with which various businesses have confronted the problems at hand. To be sure, in a sub-chapter on "Document Management Systems," the author states that "it can be concluded that document management products in the market do not meet basic record-keeping requirements, and may even contribute to the continued loss of 'institutional memory.'" It is beyond doubt that the frenzy with which some institutions have procured imaging systems to alleviate storage problems has obscured the longer term requirements of record-keeping, and that some products are still oblivious to the basic requirement for migration from system to system. Nevertheless, some software manufacturers have displayed an awareness of longer term requirements, and initiatives such as the United States Department of Defence Standard DOD 5015.2 and the Australian Record Keeping Standard, AS4390, are identifying firm objectives around which to develop their document management products. In fact, bundled document management and records management software is clearly the most economical solution for most enterprises when seeking answers to the loss of corporate control over a diverse form of records. As a result, it is essential for archivists to develop a clear awareness of the products in this field, including their limitations and advantages in the context of long-term preservation needs. It is, after all, practical advice which records creators are most often seeking from archives, and we need to establish a credibility in such areas before we, on an individual and collective basis, can offer guidance on what attributes a system must possess before it constitutes a "record-keeping system."

To this end, the *Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective* offers a more structured presentation of the reality archivists face and the choices that archives must make to properly establish an electronic records program. After laying out a skeletal outline of the historical developments and recent trends which relate to electronic records technology, an identification of key concepts and strategies follows. At the centre of the work stands a section on the "Concept of the Archival Function." In reading this section of the booklet, one discerns clearly the balance struck between the European traditions and the North American and Australian traditions. In describing records appraisal, it is stated that "in the traditional paper based environment, the players entrusted with carrying out the appraisal and selection parts of the archival function have varied somewhat, according to differing administrative and organizational traditions." In such statements even the staunchest Jenkinsonian or the most avid Schellenbergian can identify themselves. It is this effort at balance that leaves the reader with the impression of a "guide" and not a polemic. While there is a strong and reasoned argument for the pro-active approach of positioning archives right at the conception of record-keeping systems, there is also an acknowledgment that the legal framework or cultural situation of specific institutions may prevent this from occurring. The consistent presentation of best practices and of the mitigating circumstances that can dictate that different approaches be taken leaves the reader with a firm idea of the pragmatism that is required and how difficult some future steps will be.

**Paul Marsden**

National Archives of Canada

**Archival Security: From the Outside Looking In.** ROBERT K. O'NEIL, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 1998. 120 p. ISBN 0-7890-0519-0.

My active interest in archival security dates to around four years ago when a cache of documents stolen from the Archives of Ontario was recovered with the aid of a collector and the Ontario Provincial Police, and I was part of a team that was assigned to the identification of materials to prove our ownership. I have since been involved in the development of improved policies and procedures as a member of the Archives of Ontario's Security Committee. I was, therefore, pleased to review this book in terms of how valuable it may be to others involved in this area.

This collection of articles (concurrently published as an issue of the *Journal of Library Administration*) is designed to provide managers and line staff in archives and libraries with a broad selection of viewpoints on the problems faced in the protection of collections. In his introductory essay, O'Neil cor-